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**WEAPONS SALES TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND
ARMS CONTROL IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Weapons Sales to the Middle East and
Arms Control in the New World Order

FORMAT: Strategy Research Paper

DATE: 2 April 1996 Pages: 25 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Because of a decline in U.S. defense spending and the need for a Defense Industrial Base to sustain a globally competitive edge in a buyer's market through the sale of arms, weapons control is a key area of concern. A U.S. goal in the post Cold War environment is to keep weapons, and the associated manufacturing of high technology away from countries who might direct them against our forces, or in ways which place regional or global stability at risk. This study explores the surge of weapons buying by countries in the Middle East, and the U.S. policy towards conventional arms transfers to these countries.

L. Introduction

For a brief period after the Cold War, negotiated arms control appeared to be consigned to history. Great emphasis was placed on the United Nations as the "peace keepers of the world," and the organization that would in fact keep the peace in the "new world order."¹ Ironically, in many respects the post-Cold War is more unstable than the Cold War era and is characterized by increased violence. War has been waged in over sixty countries with the potential for this trend to continue.²

Since the enforcement record of the United Nations is not uniformly successful, the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War sparked a conventional weapons buying surge throughout the world. According to a congressional report, "Arms proliferation is emerging as the greatest post-Cold War threat to the United States and world security." In 1991 the Middle East and East Asia were responsible for almost half (48%) of the world's arms trade. The remaining imports were highly dispersed among one hundred-twenty nine other countries. Since the 1991 Gulf War, several Middle Eastern countries have stepped up their arms purchases, especially Saudi Arabia (\$16.5 billion), Israel (\$6.8 billion), and Kuwait (\$2.5 billion). Completing deals made before the war, Egypt also continues to buy F-16 fighters and M1A1 tanks.

The greater Middle East is expected to be the world's largest market for arms import for the rest of the decade. The emerging concept of a greater Middle East encompasses the territory between Turkey in the north and the Horn of Africa in the south, and between Morocco to the west and Pakistan to the east. Events in the first half of this decade have significantly strengthened America's strategic hand in the Middle East, but several long-term

trends threaten to undermine this progress and once again make the region dangerous to Western interest. The type and extent of future U.S. military engagement in the greater Middle East could be determined by the direction of these trends.³

This paper will analyze the economic, security, and political, factors contributing to the conventional weapons buying surge in the Middle East. The United States' development of a comprehensive policy on arms transfer as it pertains to the Middle east, will also be examined.

II. Background

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the withering of its bilateral security ties abroad have severely reduced Moscow's ability to affect regional events and has drastically changed the orientation of countries such as Syria and Yemen. Without the Soviet Union competing in the region, the U.S. emerged as the principal external actor. This advantage was reinforced by the outcome of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and our continuing effort in defense of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Washington invested its diplomatic advantages wisely and helped broker peace agreements between Israel and Jordan. Peace efforts are also continuing with Syria. The American role has seldom been as dominant.⁴

During Desert Storm the United States Army showcased information-rich systems that assessed the battlefield, focused resources, and displayed stealth aircraft that rendered sophisticated anti-aircraft systems useless.⁵ The weapons systems were impressive and highly desirable. The cruise missile, the Multiple Launch Rocket (MLRS), and the PATRIOT

missile systems enjoyed overnight popularity. There was a mad dash by the Middle East as well as Third World countries to procure the newer technology thereby providing the industry in the United States with buyers.

III. Economic Interest

When the Berlin Wall came tumbling down and the Soviet Union disintegrated, a new era of peace and prosperity seemed on the horizon. There was hope that the billions of dollars fueling the Cold War arms race could be channeled into the civilian economy. But five years later there is little talk of peace dividends or defense contractors converting to consumer products. Conventional arms proliferation is a function of weapons' supply and demand. Sellers are primarily concerned with the economic gains regardless of impact of the sale on regional stability or balance of power. While defense spending by industrialized nations has been falling, total military spending in the developing world is steadily increasing. The largest share of arms sales today goes to the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia.

Arms sales are big business. There are six major arms supplier countries as well as twenty four or more other countries who are cashing in on the constant demand for weapons. Nearly every industrialized nation and many Third World countries are actively competing for foreign armament sales. Several, such as Brazil and China (now major suppliers) have very permissive export policies and have indicated they will not join any restraint regimes.

The top five suppliers are the United States, Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, with the United States as the undisputed leader in conventional armament sales. In fiscal year 1991, the United States was responsible for forty-eight percent of the major conventional weapons sold worldwide and sixty percent of all sales in the Third World. The dollar amount of arms sold in 1992 was 10.3 billion. In fiscal year 1993, the U.S. was responsible for fifty-three percent of arms sales worth 10.8 billion dollars. In 1994, the U.S. arms sales amounted to 24 billion dollars, but declined to 13 billion in the fiscal year 1995 due to military budget cuts in most purchasing nations. In the current year 1996, the U.S. has seventy percent of the world market with Russia and Germany second and third respectively.⁶ The Defense Department analysts cite six reasons why the U.S. industrial base has an overwhelming dominance in foreign military sales.

- Customers are seeking interoperability with the U.S. military.
- Products are generally regarded as "top of the line."
- The DoD and U.S. companies continue to perform research and development to stay at the head of the pack.
- Weapons systems prices charged by American firms are competitive.
- Service and training after the sale are regarded as "outstanding."
- U.S. firms are benefiting from long-standing buyer-seller relationships.⁷

From an industry standpoint, the transfer of arms is of major importance to the Department of Defense. The Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) which represents the major U.S. producers of commercial military and business aircraft, aircraft engines, missiles, spacecraft, and related components and equipment presents a disturbing argument for the continued high export of U.S. conventional arms. The association indicated that in the past the U.S., with its high defense budgets, has always had the luxury of designing a product

strictly for its own military, generally for a single use. Recent decreasing military budgets have caused U.S. military purchases to be down. The lowered defense budget has resulted in plant layoffs and decreased work for sub-contractors.⁸ The industry has seen its work force shrink by three hundred thousand or nearly twenty-five percent due to the lower budget. They see no reason to abandon foreign markets and throw more U.S. workers out of work, when they make superior products and can sell to friendly customers.⁹

The AIA also stated that the export of conventional arms will keep the unit price of new systems down for U.S. defense purchases and the export business will fill the gap between production of new technology of the 80's and the older technology of the 70's. Also, production of these systems will keep production lines warm and a trained labor force employed for key systems and their components.¹⁰

In sub-tier industries, such as machine tools, gears, optics, bearings, castings, and forging, the ability to expand domestic production quickly may already be lost.¹¹ The smaller suppliers, who produce components for larger systems are less flexible than major suppliers in adapting to downturns in the industry. These smaller industries have less capital and are unable to adapt and change as quickly as major firms. Also, larger defense contractors are bringing more work in-house, further aggravating the plight of the sub-tier firms.

Therefore, the industry believes the U.S. government should pursue a two-track approach to defense trade, encouraging multilateral efforts to reduce arms races and at the same time making arms and technology available to friendly countries when appropriate.¹²

On the other hand, while arms exports benefit the defense industry and keep the labor force working, they cannot substitute for other programs to ensure availability of the systems and capabilities that the Department of Defense needs.¹³ Also, the United States cannot allow itself to be in a position of having to approve arms exports for the sake of defense industrial and economic benefits when the national security and/or foreign policy risks are high.¹⁴ Defense industrial and economic needs must be approached as issues in their own right.

Russia, the second largest exporter, is in such need of hard currency that the arms export business will continue without a voluntary reduction for the next twenty to thirty years. Russian quality is poor, but with foreign investors the quality improves making Russia capable of competing with other supplier nations including the United States. The fact that Russia has a well-deserved reputation of low standards of quality control, providing poor quality weapons, and technical and managerial shortcomings does hamper sales. Russia explains that the incompetent Iraqi training and handling of Russian equipment, not the equipment itself, were responsible for Iraqi defeat in the Gulf War. Similar arguments were made for Syria's defeat by Israel in 1973. These explanations must be viewed in relation to the fact that Russia needs to explain away its failures, to keep its arms business. The chaotic and unstable situation in Russia does bring into question the reliability of future support and availability of replacement parts for their weapons systems. Regardless, Russia will still have a share of the market in the Middle East even though the U.S. will continue to control most of this lucrative market.

IV. U.S. Security Interest in the Middle East

The Middle East is of major importance to the United States and the world because of its oil wealth. The region has seventy-five percent of the world's oil reserves and supplies the U.S. with twenty-two percent of its requirements, Western Europe forty-three percent and Japan sixty-eight percent. Some experts are suggesting these numbers will increase by ten percent over the next decade. It produced twenty-five percent of the world's oil in 1994. The oil in the Middle East is by far the cheapest to produce in the world. Even though the oil producing states no longer have the influence to manipulate prices to the extent OPEC once had, the lower the price of oil in the world, the greater the importance the Middle East is to the U.S. economy and its allies¹⁵.

To this point, the U.S. wants to ensure that Persian Gulf oil flows without supply disruption that could inflict considerable cost on the U.S. economy. The U.S. also wants oil prices to remain stable so the world will not be thrown into a recession. Finally, the U.S. wants to prevent free shipping restraints along the sea lines in the region.

Despite positive developments and dangerous prospects, core U.S. strategic interests in the area remain essentially what they were during the Cold War. Protecting access to Persian Gulf oil, maintaining peace between Israel and its neighbors, and limiting radical political movements remain vital U.S. interests. What changed significantly is the political context of these challenges. While a considerable consensus remains between American and regional views regarding security threats, the shift towards domestic priorities by key governments could begin to undermine this consensus.¹⁶

It is commonly accepted that the Middle East is awash in conventional arms, with pressure for the delivery of ever more exotic, lethal equipment. It is also commonly asserted that such supplies are basically destabilizing and hence that some means or mechanism must be found to control, or at least reduce, these massive arms sales. The overall arms-imports problem in the Middle East, now and for the foreseeable future, is a consequence of relations among Israel, the Arab states and Iran, with Turkey as an uneasy but politically marginal player. The export of conventional weapons is, and will remain, dependent on supply and demand rather than on arms-control agreements.¹⁷

According to the forecast and analysis conducted by the United States Under Secretary of Defense, in the years 1992 and 1993, thirty-seven countries received ninety-two percent of total U.S. arms exports and eighty percent of the arms exports of the rest of the world, for a total of eighty-six percent of global arms deliveries.¹⁸ Today, there are more than one hundred-forty countries receiving U.S. arms with the Middle East as the world's largest market. This trend will continue through the rest of the decade.¹⁹

As stated earlier, the Middle East and East Asia were responsible for almost half of the world's arms trade in 1993. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, and Israel accounted for \$9.6 billion or about 38 percent of world arms imports. Most Gulf states prefer U.S. hardware and have negotiated for major systems. Arms sales offer tangible benefits to American industry and are an effective means of upgrading regional military capabilities and boosting interoperability among U.S. and local forces. The remaining imports were highly dispersed among one hundred-twenty nine other countries.

Saudi Arabia is expected to remain the world's largest arms importer and is expected to acquire an estimated \$32.4 billion in military equipment during the remainder of the decade. By itself, Saudi Arabia accounts for more than half of the total Middle East demand. Procurement will include advanced fighter aircrafts, major ground equipment, and support equipment and systems. The Saudi government has already contracted for a range of equipment and support that includes the U.S. made M1A2 tank, F-15 and F-16 fighters and the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle. Major procurement for helicopters and electronic warfare equipment are also anticipated. Currently, the relatively low world market price levels for petroleum continue to hamper the potential procurement of frigates, tanker aircraft, and airborne warning and control systems.¹⁸ The Middle East region's projection of arms imports range between \$54.2 billion and \$63.6 billion for the remainder of the decade 1994-2000, accounting for approximately thirty percent of all deliveries.

The U.S. must maintain a balance of power in the region, favorable to itself and its allies (namely Israel) interests. An emergence of a hostile regional hegemony, such as Iran or Iraq in the Persian Gulf or any sub region, would threaten vital U.S. interests. Therefore, the U.S. has committed to protecting the territorial integrity of Israel during the Arab-Israel peace process.

In 1988, the United States formalized its defense commitments to Israel. A memorandum of agreement on strategic cooperation signed in that year committed the United States to guarantee Israel's security and assure its military supremacy over actual and potential enemies indefinitely. This agreement is the basic charter of America's defense

relationship with Israel. The premises on which this charter was based, however, are now being rapidly overtaken by successes in U.S. and Israeli diplomacy.¹⁹ The Arab-Israeli peace process is showing positive signs of ending this long standing confrontation. Three events have had a major impact: the October 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, the September 13, 1993, signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel and the July 1994 Jordanian-Israeli Accord. The Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) talks have made several proposals, including confidence and security building measures to increase trust between these parties in hopes that it will eventually reduce actual military capabilities.²⁰

The talks have now turned to Syria, but a Syria-Israeli peace accord is still a distant dream. President Hafez-al-Asad of Syria is genuinely interested in a deal, involving the acquisition of the Golan but, is proceeding cautiously. The Golan Heights is a valuable territory which dominates Israeli territory 600 feet below, provides an intelligence listening post, and provides easy access to Damascus, thirty miles away. Both sides regard the Golan Heights as militarily valuable territory. Each side is reluctant to compromise on the acquisition of this territory. Most analysts expect an Israeli-Syrian agreement will require Israeli withdrawal and full diplomatic relations between the two states phased in over a period of years.

The key issue on the Palestinian-Israeli and the Jordanian-Israeli peace processes is the implementation of the September 13, 1993, Declaration of Principles accord and the May 4, 1994, Cairo Agreement. The transition from fighting to governing was difficult for

the PLO and the activists in the Israeli-occupied territories. The changes did not come as quickly as the population had hoped. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and the Jericho area in May 1994 was the first step in the implementation of these agreements.

The partners in the peace negotiations share a fundamental political strategy that ties their own domestic political health with regional and international cooperation. The expectation of positive economic and political windfalls from a peace settlement is a common denominator for the PLO, President Mubarak, and Israel's Labor-led coalition.²¹ Mutual concessions are needed to replace a huge military burden with a developmental plan and greater international competitiveness. Such concessions may seem risky in the short term, but they hold great potential for decimating the ranks of opponents to the peace process in the region. The success of this strategy will benefit the citizens of this region as well as the political leadership that embrace a "trading state" approach to the twenty first century.²²

V. U.S. Political Interest and arms control policy in the Middle East

Many governments in the region are confronting mounting challenges to the status quo from rising expectations from extremist groups for what is perceived as poor past performances. Demographic pressures, failed economic programs, and disillusionment with the quality of governance in many Middle Eastern states ensure that pressure for political change will continue to build. There are few well established mechanisms for leadership change, and even where such processes exist, it is not clear that they will work. A number of monarchies and one party states on which the West relies for support have aging or ill

leaders, some of whom are likely to be replaced within the next five years. King Hussein of Jordan is 59 and has recently been hospitalized for cancer; King Fahd of Saudi Arabia is 73; King Hassan II of Morocco is 65; and President Asad of Syria is 64 and suffers from heart trouble. In some cases (Jordan, Saudi Arabia), the lines of succession have been delineated. In others (Egypt, Syria), change could produce a struggle for power that may weaken the regime. The demise of King Hussein could adversely affect the peace process. King Fahd's successor might be less accommodating to the U.S. In almost all cases, leadership is likely to be assumed by a younger generation, often educated at home and with less exposure to the West. This could lead to greater independence in foreign policy and more reluctance to cooperate with the West.²³ Nevertheless, there are some important common threads from the point of U.S. security interests

On February 17, 1995 the White House Press Secretary, Michael McCurry issued a statement announcing President Clinton's approval of the Conventional Arms Transfer Policy. He stated that, "The United States still continues to view transfers of conventional arms as a legitimate instrument of U.S. foreign policy-deserving U.S. Government support when they enable us to help friends and allies deter aggression, promote regional security, and increase interoperability of U.S. forces and allied forces."²⁴

The policy issued by the President serves the following goals:

1. To ensure that our military forces can continue to enjoy technological advantages over potential adversaries.
2. To help allies and friends deter or defend themselves against aggression, while promoting interoperability with U.S. forces when combined operations are required.

3. To promote regional stability in areas critical to U.S. interests, while preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their missile delivery systems.
4. To promote peaceful conflict resolution and arms control, human rights, democratization, and other U.S. foreign policy objectives.
5. To enhance the ability of the U.S. defense industrial base to meet U.S. defense requirements and maintain long term military technological superiority at lower costs.²⁵

The policy further states that a critical element of U.S. policy is to promote control, restraint, and transparency of arms transfers. The U.S. pushed to replace the now defunct Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM) and increase participation in the UN Register of Conventional Arms. Also, the U.S. will take the lead to expand the register to include military holdings and procurement through national production to provide a more complete picture of change in a nation's military capabilities each year.

COCOM was phased out to respond to the new security challenges that developed at the end of the Cold War. A new regime is needed to meet certain goals that address new dangers to international peace and security. A main concern is to ensure stability in the Middle East and South Asia by preventing acquisition of and deterring destabilizing buildups of conventional arms and other sensitive technologies by dangerous states such as Iran. The objectives of the new regime are:

- To deal firmly and creatively with dangerous states that are contributing to tensions in regions such as the Middle East.
- To further the process of engaging Russia and other New Independent States in establishing effective export control systems and combating the global proliferation of weapons and sensitive dual use technology.
- To close gaps in the non-proliferation regimes and improve our ability to enhance regional stability by controlling conventional arms and sensitive

- dual use sales on a multilateral basis for the first time, and
- To remove disadvantages placed on U.S. exporters by the lack of adequate multilateral coordination on sensitive transfers to terrorist states and on other threats.²⁶

The UN Register of Conventional Arms was established in December 1991 and came into operation in 1993. The register is a voluntary transparency measure and does not involve limits or controls on arms transfers or holdings. It is entirely compatible with the rights of states to decide for themselves what conventional forces they need for self defense. It aims to improve international transparency, relating to arms transfers and holdings, to build mutual confidence, and to promote international consultations on potentially destabilizing regional arms buildups. Many hope the increased transparency will increase international and domestic pressures against "irresponsible" or potentially destabilizing production or transfers of major weapon's systems, encourage restraint and promote informed public debate.²⁷ In the register's first year, eighty countries responded to the information request in time to be included in the report. In fiscal year 1994, only fifty seven percent of the countries involved in the U.S. arms agreements participated in the register.²⁸

Another aspect of the policy is that transfers of arm will continue to be made on a case by case basis. The case by case reviews will be guided by a set of criteria that assures a balance between legitimate sales and the need for multilateral restraint. The criteria for decision making on U.S. Arms Exports will take into account the following general criteria:

- Consistency with international agreements and arms control initiatives.
- Appropriateness of the transfer in responding to legitimate U.S. and recipient security.

- Consistency with U.S. regional stability interests, especially when considering transfers involving power capacity or introduction of a system which may foster increased tension or contribute to an arms race.
- The degree to which the transfer supports U.S. strategic and foreign policy interests through increased access and influence allied burden sharing and interoperability.
- The impact of the proposed transfer on U.S. capacities and technological advantage, particularly in protecting sensitive software and hardware design, development, manufacturing, and integration knowledge.
- The impact on U.S. industry and the defense industrial base whether the sale is approved or not.
- The degree of protection afforded sensitive technology and potential for unauthorized third-party transfer, as well as in country diversion to unauthorized uses.
- The risk of revealing system vulnerabilities and adversely impacting U.S. operational capabilities in the event of compromise.
- The risk of adverse economic, political, or social impact within the recipient nation and the degree to which security needs can be addressed by other means.
- The human rights, terrorism, and proliferation record for misuse of the export in question.
- The availability of comparable systems from foreign suppliers.
- The ability of the recipient effectively to field, support, and appropriately employ the requested system in accordance with its intended end use.

Some critics of the policy say these criteria are too open-ended, allowing sales to many states with even more states eligible whenever sales are "in the interest of U.S. national security".²⁹ The policy continues with upgrades of equipment, which is a growing segment of the market. It states that the U.S. government should support U.S. firm's participation in that segment of the market also. A list of eight criteria for upgrade purposes is included in the policy statement. These criteria are:

- Upgrade programs must be well defined to be considered for approval.
- Upgrades should be consistent with general conventional arms transfer criteria outlined above.

- There will be a presumption of denial of exports to upgrade programs that lead to a capacity beyond that which the U.S. would be willing to export directly.
- Careful review of the total scope of proposed upgrade programs is necessary to ensure that the U.S. licensing decisions are consistent with U.S. policy on transfers of equivalent new systems.
- U.S. contributions to upgrade programs initiated by foreign prime contractors should be evaluated against the same standard.
- Protection of U.S. technologies must be ensured because of the inherent risk of technology transfer in the integration efforts that typically accompany an upgrade project.
- Upgrades will be subject to standard U.S. Government written end-use and retransfer assurances by both the integration efforts that typically accompany an upgrade project.
- Benchmarks should be established for upgrades of specific types of systems, to provide a policy baseline against which 1) individual arms transfer proposals can be assessed and 2) proposed departures from the policy must be justified.

This Presidential Directive, although originally designed to clarify the U.S. arm's policy, was generally viewed as a concession to the U.S. arms industry.³⁰ This policy formalized the Clinton administration's support for continued high levels of U.S. arms sales and its commitment to help the U.S. defense industry maintain its predominance in the international markets. It came as a disappointment for those hoping it would impose significant limits on arms sales.

The laws and policies governing U.S. weapons transfers have not ensured that weapons technology is supplied only to reliable allies who use them for legitimate defensive purposes. It is not possible that of all the weapons shipped to countries in the Middle East, overtly or covertly, all are ruled by staunch U.S. allies yearning to make the world safe for democracy, human rights, and free markets.

For arms exporters like the U.S. and its Middle East clients there are some advantages. Selling arms includes sending sizeable training teams to the region as well as providing training in the home country. For the U.S. this means a considerable and fairly constant infiltration of manpower into the countries concerned. More important to host countries, however, has been the visible evidence of lasting U.S. involvement, which may well do more for the respective countries' feeling of security than the actual equipment. These military liaison teams also provide an additional channel of information and a means by which concerns and apprehensions can be expressed by either side when normal diplomatic channels are considered to hidebound or otherwise slow or unresponsive. In the Middle East, where numerous intrigues are constantly boiling, these extra channels provide additional battlegrounds for the martialing of support by the various local factions.

As long as the success of the peace process is threatened by the hesitant policies of the ruling Israeli government and its razor-thin majority is constantly threatened by the intrigues of the smaller parties in the Knesset, the possibility of the Likud Party returning to power cannot be excluded. If the Likud Party returns to power, there could be a rapid cooling relationship between Israel and the Arabs. Even in that case, U.S. support of Israel's military superiority remains a given well into the next century. Hence, all Arab regimes and their military establishments will find it necessary to acquire even more sophisticated armaments, however hopeless may be the actual application of that equipment in a renewed Arab-Israeli conflict. However remote the flare-up of a renewed Arab-Israeli military conflict is, actual arms control agreements seem unlikely in view of the fact that any such pact would constitute

the contractual acceptance by the Arab states of Israel's continued and guaranteed superiority.³²

VI. Conclusion

Recent successes in the Arab-Israeli peace process offer the prospect for the first time of transforming the security environment of the Middle East. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Arab-Israel front had one of the world's highest concentrations of advanced weaponry. If the peace process broadens to include a Syrian-Israeli accord and deepens with a final status agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, the Levant states are likely to move towards smaller militaries with older weapons. Furthermore, security cooperation patterns could change, as Israel ceases to be a pariah. However, even under the best of circumstances, changes will come slowly. One short-term difference, however, could be a change in arms sales to Arab states, as indicated by the end of Israeli objections to Jordanian purchases of weapons systems like the F-16.³³

Too many countries spend limited resources on militaries that serve only to suppress their own people. Oscar Aris, winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize and President of Costa Rica from 1986-1990 proposed a "Global Code of Conduct on the Arms Trade," to protect poor nations from unnecessary militarization". The code would stress that any decision to export arms should take into account factors pertaining to the country of final destination. The recipient country must promote democracy with free elections and fair elections . It must promote civilian control of the military and security forces and the rule of the law. The

government must respect human rights. The code will not permit sales to any nation engaged in armed aggression in violation of international law. And finally, the code will require the purchasing country to participate in the UN Conventional Register of Arms. He stated that, "Our time is one of increasing interdependence on our planet. By globally curtailing the arms trade, we would be taking a monumental step toward guaranteeing the security of our people and our environment."³⁴

More than twenty three million people have been killed by conventional arms since the end of World War II. More are being killed everyday. This continuing spiral of violence will escalate with the high level of arms transfers. It will stop only if the major and minor arms transferring nations make a concerted effort to restrain the destructive global arms traffic. The United States is in a unique position to reduce the world transfers because of our massive arms trade.

According to Alvin and Heidi Toffler, " Peace can sometimes be promoted by economic measures or imposed by force. But these are not the only available tools. Peace at the dawn of the twenty first century requires the surgical application of a less tangible but frequently more potent weapon: knowledge. What is glaringly absent today even as armies begin thinking strategically about the use of knowledge are coherent knowledge strategies for peace."³⁵

The Clinton administration's arms sales policy assumes in part that the U.S. system of regulation and oversight is sorting out the bad deals, affirming the good ones, and reinforcing U.S. diplomatic, strategic and economic interest the Middle East. But, in fact, U.S.

conventional arms trafficking in the Middle East and other parts of the world has in the past proven to be seriously awry in at least four major ways: by fueling conflicts and escalating regional arms races; by promoting territorial expansion and cross border aggression; and, by facilitating terrorism and repression.³⁶ While the U.S. advocates a policy of promoting peace and democracy, the loose arms sales policy in the Middle East continues to be based on the almighty dollar.

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